

Temporary Measures for Case Identification and Exposure Management in School During a Surge Period

Considerations for simplifying case identification and exposure management in TK-12 schools during a COVID-19 surge is outlined below. These considerations are optional for institutions that do not have the capacity to conduct routine exposure management, as outlined in the TK-12 Exposure Management Plan, during a surge period. These considerations are temporary and guided by transmission patterns during a surge period. As such, Public Health will provide communication on when schools may activate a surge protocol for case identification and exposure management.

1-12-2022: This surge protocol is active.

Case Management: Identification and Isolation of COVID-19 Cases

- Schools should prioritize identification of COVID-19 on campus and isolation of cases. This should take precedence over other COVID-19 measures.
- Schools should inform parents of infected children that they need to keep their children in isolation at home to prevent further spread on campus. Notification can be individualized or through an email blast or robocall to parents of positive cases. *Please refer to [isolation notification template](#) (posted on ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12) for a model you can use.*
 - a. Parents who have questions about isolation requirements can call the DPH COVID-19 Information Hotline at 1-833-540-0473. This line is available in multiple languages and operates 7 days a week from 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM.
 - b. If schools would like DPH to conduct additional outreach to parents of the infected student(s), a phone number for the family should be included in your case report to DPH. Refer to section on reporting below, for instructions on simplified case reporting during the surge period.
- If schools have multiple cases in a cohort/group (e.g., classroom, sports group, etc.) that may be linked, administrators should immediately contact the DPH Education Sector COVID-19 Case Reporting hotline or email ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov to report the cluster.

COVID-19 Exposure Management

- Schools may not have the capacity to do contact tracing given the volume of cases during the surge period. Schools that are unable to determine who was exposed to an infected individual at school may simplify exposure management by notifying the entire relevant group (e.g., classroom, sports group, art group, etc.) of potential exposure and providing them with instructions. This can also be done by an email blast or robocall. *Refer to sample group [exposure notification template](#) (posted on ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12) for a model you can use.*

There are two groups of exposed students that may remain in school: asymptomatic

students that are fully vaccinated, and asymptomatic students eligible for modified quarantine because they only had mask-to-mask exposure with the positive case at school. These students may remain at school as long as they remain asymptomatic and wear a well-fitted mask at all times.

Schools are required to have sufficient testing capacity two weeks after re-opening from winter break to test exposed students remaining on campus at least once (either antigen or PCR tests are acceptable), preferably on or around Day 5. Though not required, consider also testing immediately. Please notify DPH if you do not have this testing capacity.

- Schools are not required to report information about close contacts to DPH during the surge period. Refer to the following section on reporting procedures during the surge period.

Reporting COVID-19 Cases and Close Contacts

- Until the end of January, isolation of cases and exposure management are the most important strategies for limiting spread. Reporting cases and close contacts is secondary. If schools lack capacity to submit a REDCap report or Excel line list for case and close contact reporting, they can do the following:
 - a. Case information: Case information may be submitted in any format the school prefers at ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. The school has the option of limiting the report to: last name, first name, and date of the infected child's COVID-19 test. As noted above, if schools would like DPH to conduct additional outreach to the parents of the infected student(s), a phone number for the family should be included in the case report. Schools may submit additional case information, if capacity allows.
 - b. Close contact information: Schools are not required to report close contact information during this surge period. Schools that are able to report close contacts may simplify reporting by limiting the information to: last name, first name, and date of last exposure to the infected child. Schools may submit other contact information, if capacity allows. Contact reports may be submitted via our routine REDCap report, Excel line list, or in any format the school prefers.

Testing

- Schools with limited testing capacity should prioritize response testing of staff and students with symptoms or exposures over regular, weekly testing.
- In particular, prioritize testing to allow asymptomatic, exposed students and staff to remain in school. See quarantine and testing requirements for specific categories of staff and students below:
 - a. Staff and students who had a positive COVID-19 test within the last 90 days and are asymptomatic ***do not need to quarantine or test after exposure.***
 - b. Asymptomatic staff that are fully vaccinated and boosted (if eligible) and asymptomatic students who are fully vaccinated ***do not need to quarantine***

after exposure. They may remain in school if they test negative on a viral test (e.g., PCR or Antigen) after exposure, preferably on or around Day 5 (Day 4 or Day 6 is acceptable). Though not required, consider also testing immediately.

- c. Staff who are fully vaccinated, and eligible but not yet boosted are **required to quarantine after exposure**. They may remain in school if they are asymptomatic and get a viral test (e.g., PCR or Antigen) within 3 to 5 days after last exposure and test negative but must quarantine at home when outside of work.
 - d. Students who are not fully vaccinated AND students who have symptoms are **required to quarantine after exposure**. If students are asymptomatic and had a mask-on-mask exposure at school, they may remain in school under modified quarantine provided they meet testing and masking requirements. During the surge period, the testing requirement is modified to a minimum of once weekly testing, preferably on or around Day 5. Ideally they should test twice: once as soon as possible after exposure and once again on or around Day 5.
 - e. Staff who are unvaccinated are **required to quarantine** and may **not** remain in school during the quarantine period. They must follow the Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.
 - f. All staff and students who remain in school must wear a well-fitting medical grade mask at all times for 10 days, except while eating or drinking; children should wear a well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.
- Though response testing is the priority for school testing, schools may continue to conduct weekly asymptomatic, screening testing if they have enough testing capacity to do both. Note: In youth sports programs, weekly testing **is still required** for unvaccinated athletes of all ages, for students participating in indoor moderate or high-risk sports and for all unvaccinated athletes aged 12 years and older and staff participating in outdoor moderate or high-risk sports.
 - DPH will work with LACOE to identify and address barriers to required COVID-19 testing by schools. To improve testing access, schools may accept results of students' at-home or over-the-counter tests for all testing needs. This is true for staff as well, except for required weekly testing for unvaccinated staff, which needs to be performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site.

Vaccination

- Since the need to quarantine is determined by incomplete vaccination, DPH will maximize our support for mobile vaccine clinics at the schools and make sure parents and students know that they can be best protected and will not have to quarantine if they are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Communication

- DPH will, as noted above, support schools by responding to questions from parents of students who have COVID-19.

- The DPH Education Sector COVID-19 Case Reporting hotline remains fully staffed and available to help with all aspects of case management, contact tracing and outbreak management. School Administrators can get assistance by calling this number Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or by emailing ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- DPH will prepare and translate template documents that schools can use to notify parents of children in all categories of infection or exposure, explaining what is required in each case. These and other documents are located at: ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12.